Alternative Education Advisory Committee Meeting
December 19, 2007

Committee Comments & Considerations

The Alternative Education Advisory Committee (AEAC) is composed of a variety of persons representing different role groups.   Although the purpose of the AEAC meeting was to gather input from the committee, it did not seem feasible that the large number of committee members could reach consensus on each of the focus questions. For that reason, the information below only contains committee members' comments and ideas for consideration.

I.   Accountability

1. *If A5-A6 programs are going to receive their own CATS results, what is a fair method of accountability (to recognize the special circumstances of many of these students)? Continuous Growth Model? Dual Accountability?*
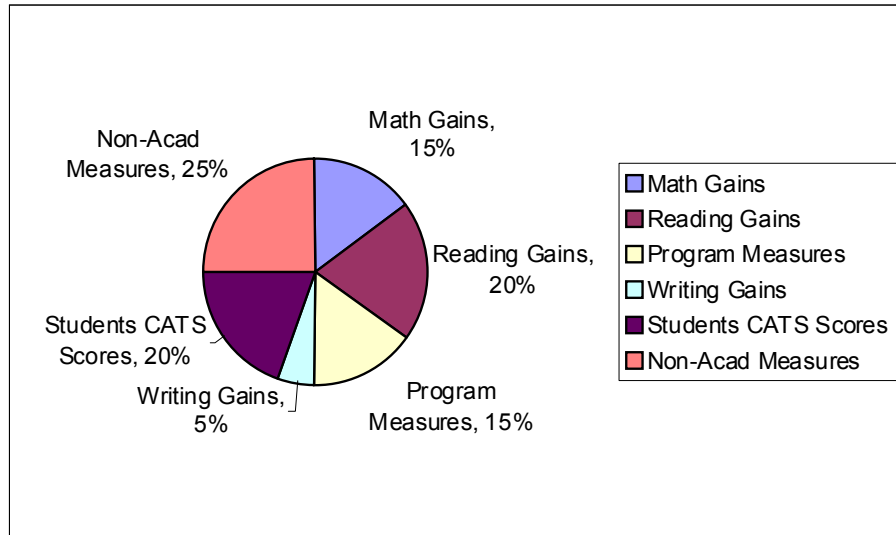
Comments:
- Traditional assessment does not work for A-5/A-6
- Scores should go back to A1 school
- Prefer a continuous growth model (with pre & post testing)
- 80% of our students are four grade levels behind in reading
- Accountability needs to be shared
- Trend data for over-representation of specific populations should be in accountability (i.e., ethnicity/poverty/gender)
- Accountability for non-cognitive areas needs greater weight in A5/A6
- A1 school needs to be held responsible for education of child prior to placement
- Treatment issues impact educational services in A6 programs
- Traditional accountability <u>cannot</u> capture the achievement of the wide variety of instructional needs of the alternative school student population
- Could pre and posttest results be included as part of CATS?

Considerations:
- Recommend the establishment of a continuous growth model (program progress instead of individual student progress) and dual accountability (A1 and A5/A6)
- Non-cognitive factors needs more weight
- Dual accountability is a must
- Program accountability should include additional measures (dual credit courses; elective options for students; students in secondary GED programs; fully certified teachers by class and content areas; per-pupil spending at the local level)

2. *If students in A5 and A6 programs are going to be reported as subgroups in CATS results, how many days should they be in alternative education programs (currently 100 days, but probably needs to be less with student mobility)?*

<u>**Comments:**</u>
- Average length of stay in an A6 program is 83 days
- The type of measure should correlate directly with the number of days of accountability
- The problem is students come and go continuously. What is the time frame to say that a certain number of days is enough to place accountability scores with A5/A6?
- Some/many students do not spend 100 days anywhere! This should not drive assessment of A5/A6 programs

<u>**Considerations:**</u>
- Students should be in A5/A6 placement for 80-90 days for CATS
- A Continuous Progress Model would be appropriate for A5/A6 programs

Note: The Office of Assessment and Accountability in KDE has recommended that students be in alternative placement for 30 days for CATS accountability.

3. *Should all A5 and A6 programs be required to conduct pre and post assessments to show student progress?*

<u>**Comments:***</u>
Note: There was general agreement among committee members that pre and post assessments would be beneficial

- Requiring the same pre and post assessment of all programs would be most helpful (if state funding were provided). If no state funding, then districts should choose their own pre and post assessments
- Pre and post testing is a very good idea to show student progress while in alternative programs, but the same test should be used statewide
- Pre and post testing sounds like a good idea, but a pilot would be the best way to begin

Considerations:
- Funding for the pre and post assessments should be provided by the state
- The same pre and post test should be used by all A5/A6 programs and should focus on reading and mathematics
- Pre and post testing should only be required in A5 programs; A6 programs need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis

4. *What about programs that serve more than one district?*

Comments:
- ILP – the Individual Learning Plan could be used to show academic progress for students. Since the ILP "follows" students, it would be most helpful in A5/A6 programs due to the mobility of students
- Programs serving more than one school district should still be accountable – small numbers of students result in large variability

Consideration:
- CATS scores should go back to the home district, especially for students in programs less than 100 days

5. *Are regional meetings a good method for gathering input and support for alternative education initiatives? If so, what would be the most effective format for regional meetings?*

Comments:
- Yes! Regional Meetings would be <u>most</u> helpful
- Regional connections are exceptionally valuable
- Yes, regional meetings would be good, or present information at superintendent's meetings

Considerations:
- For maximum effectiveness the regional meetings should involve partners such as The Kentucky Center for School Safety, Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (KECSAC), and the Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline
- Regional meetings need to involve the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS operates programs to serve State Agency Children), the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ programs serve adjudicated youth), and the Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation (Day Treatment Programs for youth).

II.   Administrative Structure

1. *Is the current classification system (A5 and A6) adequate? Do we need additional classifications for student-choice programs?*

Comments:
- There is a need for a different classification system, but school districts first need to fully understand the current classifications of A5 and/or A6
- No, the current classification system is not adequate; Yes, there needs to be a different classification system (note: there was no recommendation of what that might be)
- Some programs do not know what they are – reeducate about what A5-A6 programs are
- Some A5 programs are in a school wing; some in a separate building; some are classrooms. For those physically located within the A1 school, it's difficult to determine if they are alternative programs or just part of the regular school
- There are various types of A5 and A6 programs: incarcerated youth are in A6 programs; teenage parents are in A5 programs; some state agency children attend the regular (A1) school instead of being served in an A6 program

Consideration:
- The current classification system (A5, A6) reflects the funding source; this differentiation is crucial and the current system should remain

2. Technology access is a problem in some programs. What could an Education Technology Readiness survey (from the KDE Office of Education Technology) accomplish?

Comments:
- There are access problems at many alternative programs mainly because of the lack of funding
- If KDE does not regard the lack of technology issue as being noncompliant, the district can get by without providing technology access
- Alternative programs are stepchildren –they get the old, outdated software/hardware from the regular schools
- Technology access for A5/A6 programs is related to the decisions made by school-district leadership. Some districts choose to provide adequate technology and connectivity to alternative programs; other districts make different choices

Considerations:
- Mandate a ratio for students-to-computers and enforce
- Provide funding and require attention to student needs

- Have a rubric to evaluate A5/A6 program services and resources – measure district A5/A6 programs against overall district A1 schools (technology; per-pupil spending; facilities; teaching staff)

2. *Without full access to technology (ILP, etc.) are students denied access to a complete education? What needs to occur to remedy this situation? Similarly, students do not have full access to ESS, school counselors, and other support systems. What needs to occur to remedy this situation?*

Comment:
- The main issue is the lack of funds.

Considerations:
- In order to provide equitable services in A5/A6 programs (including technology), there need to be additional funds and a system to ensure the funds "follow" the students into alternative placement. This would ensure local accountability for how the funds are spent.
- There should be a mandated ratio of computers to students, and monitored
- The ESS formula should be followed in alternative programs as well as the regular school

4. *What should occur at the local level to ensure that equitable funds are provided for the education of students in A5 and A6 programs? Are students with IEP's receiving all the services to which they are entitled?*

Comments:
- Many times a student's IEP is revised to fit the school's services
- Equitable funding must be monitored, but who can do the monitoring?
- Monitoring should be done annually
- Are funds distributed from the district supposed to follow the students?
- There should be equitable funds provided to A5 and A6 programs but it won't happen unless monitored by KDE
- Is it fair to show what different districts spend on students in A5/A6 programs (per pupil)?

Considerations:
- There should be a tracking system where the funds follow the child, but should not set a ceiling for students
- Dual accountability would help ensure that IEP students would receive the services for which they are entitled

3. *Is it possible (or feasible) to evaluate schools/programs for successful student transitions?*

Comments:
- There could be the possibility of evaluating successful transition if there is enough funding

- What is successful transition? A successful transition may be different for every student
- Yes, it's possible to evaluate successful student transitions if we have <u>staff and technology to do so</u>
- Define "successful transition" – <u>many A5 kids don't want to return to the A1 school</u>

<u>Consideration:</u>
- Add a section to the ILP specifically designed for students in A5 programs (successful transition; goal setting; work ethic, etc)

III. <u>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</u>

1. ***Should the EPSB regulation on teacher certification be changed (allows any certification for teachers in alternative programs)?****

<u>Comments:</u>
   * Note: A committee member suggested that A5 and A6 programs should not be allowed to have any emergency certified teachers. There was strong disagreement from several members in response to this suggestion
- Programs need the flexibility, but sometimes bad decisions are made

<u>Considerations:</u>
- There could possibly be an endorsement added for alternative schools for additional compensation for staff members
- It would not be practical to change the regulations on teacher certification; the regulation should remain in its current form
- A financial incentive should be attached to an alternative education endorsement as a means of differentiated compensation and a way to attract highly qualified teachers
- EPBS could require teacher preparation programs at Kentucky universities to place a certain percentage of student teachers in alternative education programs. This could improve the instructional services provided to students in A5/A6 programs

2. ***Should teachers in alternative programs (primarily A5) be required to participate in specific professional development experiences? What types of professional development will teachers need in order to provide interventions for students based on their pre/post assessments?***

<u>Comments:</u>
- Professional development budgets are limited
- Alternative programs are going to need PD and <u>support</u> to prepare for the high school graduation requirements of 2012
- Teachers in A5/A6 need additional training because of added layers (safety issues/treatment/behavior management)

Considerations:
- Teachers should be required to participate in specific professional development provided the professional development is quality and from people whose experiences are similar to HSE's
- KDE should develop and provide virtual professional development for free
- KDE should develop hybrid courses online that are high quality and understand the needs of these students
- A coalition of the best Kentucky alternative education teachers could develop hybrid courses, with KDE support, that could be implemented at any alternative education program

IV.   School Culture

1. *Is it feasible to include alternative programs when scholastic reviews and audits are conducted?*

Comments:
- It is feasible but an alternative version of SISI document should be used
- The issue is size. An alternative SISI document would be useful for large alternative schools but not very useful for small alternative schools

Considerations:
- There should be KDE audits as needed
- Scholastic audits and reviews need to include A5 and A6 programs – this may require additional training for review teams and the current amended version of the SISI document (amended for A5) should be used

2. *What difficulties are alternative programs likely to encounter in offering students full access to the curriculum?*

Comments:
- Alternative programs have unique needs – teachers addressing multiple grade levels and various course needs
- The certification/size is an issue. It is difficult when you have very few teachers and have a 6-12 school
- The quality of instruction becomes an issue
- Limited staff makes it difficult to offer full access
- Transportation is an issue
- A6 programs have to offer both treatment and educational services – hard to do in six hours
- There are equity issues such as lack of textbooks and technology

Considerations:
- Establish model sites where students have full access to the curriculum – use them as examples that it can be done

- Utilize technology – alternative teachers could develop courses (half on-line/half on-site teacher) to be implemented in A5/A6 programs
- Create courses (w/mental health therapists) that would focus on teaching and learning but would incorporate time for therapy